

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

JILLIAN SYMONS	:	CIVIL ACTION
	:	
Plaintiff,	:	NO. _____
	:	
v.	:	
	:	
LEHIGH VALLEY	:	
HEALTH NETWORK, INC.	:	JURY TRIAL DEMANDED
	:	
Defendant.	:	

CIVIL ACTION COMPLAINT - PREGNANCY DISCRIMINATION

Plaintiff Jillian Symons hereby complains as follows against Lehigh Valley Health Network, Inc.:

I. PARTIES

1. Plaintiff is an adult female and citizen of the United States and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. She resides in Schuylkill County, PA.
2. Defendant Lehigh Valley Health Network, Inc. (“LVHN”) is a Pennsylvania non-profit corporation with a registered fictitious name of “Lehigh Valley Health Network.”
3. LVHN maintains its headquarters in Allentown, PA, with an address of 2100 Mack Blvd., Allentown, PA 18103.
4. LVHN is comprised of 13 hospital campuses plus numerous health centers, physician practices, rehabilitation locations, ExpressCARE sites and other outpatient care locations in 10 eastern Pennsylvania counties.
5. LVHN is the parent corporation of several different hospitals, including a hospital in

Pottsville, Schuylkill County known as Lehigh Valley Hospital - Schuylkill (“LVH-S”).

6. LVHN is an “employer” within the meaning of the federal Pregnancy Discrimination Act because it is engaged in an industry affecting commerce and because it maintained or maintains fifteen (15) or more employees for each working day in each of twenty (20) or more calendar weeks during the year(s) in question.

7. At all times relevant herein, LVHN acted through its several agents, servants, and employees (including but not limited to those named elsewhere in this Complaint), each of whom acted in the course and scope of their employment for Defendant at all times relevant herein. Defendant is therefore fully responsible for the illegal and discriminatory acts and omissions of the aforesaid employees pursuant to the principle of *respondeat superior*.

8. LVHN is very proud of its purported “Core Values.” One of its purported “Core Values” is “**Integrity: Do what’s right.**” See <https://www.lvhn.org/about-us> (last visited 8/22/22).

II. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

9. The instant action is initiated pursuant to the federal Pregnancy Discrimination Act (“**PDA**”), a 1978 amendment to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. See 42 U.S.C. § 2000e(k).

10. This Court may properly maintain personal jurisdiction over LVHN because LVHN’s contacts with this state and this judicial district are sufficient for the exercise of jurisdiction over LVHN to comply with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice, satisfying

the standard set forth by the Supreme Court in *Int'l Shoe Co. v. Washington*, 326 U.S. 310 (1945) and its progeny.

11. The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania has original subject matter jurisdiction over the instant action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1343(a)(4) because it arises under the laws of the United States and seeks redress for violations of civil rights.

12. Venue is properly laid in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1391(b)(1) and/or (b)(2), because LVHN resides in and/or conducts business in this judicial district and/or because a substantial part of the acts and/or omissions giving rise to the claims set forth herein occurred in this judicial district.

III. PROCEDURAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

13. Plaintiff has satisfied the procedural and administrative requirements for proceeding under the PDA. In particular:

- a. On or about February 3, 2022, Plaintiff filed a timely written charge of discrimination with the Philadelphia district office of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (“EEOC”) where it was assigned charge number 530-2022-02450;
- b. On or about July 13, 2022, the EEOC issued a Dismissal and Notice of Rights;
- c. The instant action is timely because it is initiated within ninety (90) days of the receipt of the aforementioned Notice;

d. Plaintiff has fully exhausted her administrative remedies.

IV. FACTUAL BACKGROUND

14. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the preceding averments.

15. Plaintiff was hired in or about July 2019 as a Patient Representative.

16. In January 2021, she went out on approved medical and maternity leave.

17. In or about July 12, 2021, shortly before she was scheduled to return, Plaintiff learned that her health insurance had been cancelled.

18. When Plaintiff checked with the benefits department, she was told her employment had been terminated as of July 1, 2021.

19. When Plaintiff contacted one of her supervisors, she was told her firing was news to them.

20. Despite Plaintiff's efforts to correct things, LVHN sent her a letter in August 2021 telling her she was discharged for failing to return after approved maternity leave.

21. This explanation was entirely pretextual, as Plaintiff was prepared to return - and would have returned - had she not been told was fired before her approved leave had ended.

22. Plaintiff's firing at the end of her maternity leave is consistent with the hostility she faced after disclosing her pregnancy in 2020.

23. As soon as she informed her supervisors, she was assigned to work weekends - which she had been rarely assigned before.

24. When Plaintiff asked to work more hours, one of her supervisors replied, "You can't

be working more than you already are with being pregnant with twins,” or “We aren’t going to waste time training you in the Emergency Room or Outpatient Surgery when you are pregnant with twins.”

25. Another time the same supervisor expressed doubt that Plaintiff would be able to work after having twins, stating that Plaintiff already had one child, how would Plaintiff expect to find childcare, let alone work and care for the babies and her daughter

26. Another time Plaintiff informed the same supervisor that Plaintiff was assigned to work with someone who had just lost her baby. Plaintiff thought working together would be very difficult for the woman, given the tragedy she had just experienced. The supervisor brushed off the concern and did not adjust the assignment.

27. After firing Plaintiff, Defendant had multiple chances to be faithful to its “Core Value” of “Integrity” by making things right and getting Plaintiff reinstated. Defendant was faithless instead.

**FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION
VIOLATIONS OF THE PDA**

28. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.

29. In terminating Plaintiff’s employment because of her pregnancy, Defendant knowingly, purposefully and deliberately violated the PDA.

30. In terminating Plaintiff’s employment because of her pregnancy, Defendant engaged in discriminatory practices with malice and reckless indifference to Plaintiff’s

federally-protected rights to be free from employment discrimination based on pregnancy.

31. As a result of Defendant's unlawful discrimination, Plaintiff has suffered wage and benefit loss, other pecuniary losses, emotional pain, suffering, inconvenience, mental anguish, loss of enjoyment of life, and other non-pecuniary losses.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays that this Court enter an order providing that:

- A. Defendant is to be permanently enjoined from discriminating against Plaintiff on any basis forbidden by the PDA;
- B. Defendant is to promulgate and/or adhere to a policy prohibiting pregnancy discrimination in the workplace, and ensure this policy is fairly and adequately enforced;
- C. Defendant is to compensate Plaintiff, reimburse Plaintiff, and make Plaintiff whole for any and all pay and benefits Plaintiff would have received had it not been for Defendant's illegal actions, including but not limited to back pay, front pay, interest, salary, pay increases, bonuses, insurance, benefits, training, promotions, lost 401K or retirement benefits, and seniority. Plaintiff should be accorded those benefits illegally withheld from the date her employment was terminated until the date of verdict, and Defendant should be ordered to provide an accounting of all benefits lost by Plaintiff to ensure Plaintiff is made whole if deemed appropriate by the Court;
- D. Plaintiff is to be awarded actual damages, as well as damages for the pain, suffering, emotional distress and humiliation caused by Defendant's actions;

- E. Plaintiff is to be awarded punitive damages as permitted by the PDA, in an amount believed by the Court or trier of fact to be appropriate to punish Defendant for its willful, deliberate, malicious, reckless and outrageous conduct, and to deter Defendant and/or other employers from engaging in such misconduct in the future;
 - F. Plaintiff is to be accorded equitable or injunctive relief as allowed by applicable law;
 - G. Plaintiff is to be awarded the costs and expenses of this action and reasonable attorneys' fees as provided by applicable federal and state law;
 - H. This Court should grant any and all other such legal or equitable relief as it deems necessary, just, and appropriate;
 - I. This Court should maintain jurisdiction over the instant action to ensure full compliance with its Orders therein until such time it is satisfied that its Orders and dictates have been complied with in full by Defendant;
 - J. Plaintiff's claims are to receive a trial by jury to the extent allowed by applicable law.
- Plaintiff has also endorsed this demand on the caption of this Complaint in accordance with Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 38(b).

Respectfully submitted,

WEINSTEIN LAW FIRM, LLC
By: /s/ Marc E. Weinstein
Marc E. Weinstein, Esquire
500 Office Center Drive, Suite 400
Fort Washington, PA 19034
267.513.1942 tel
marc@meweinsteinlaw.com
Counsel to Plaintiff

CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS

JILLIAN SYMONS

(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff **SCHUYLKILL COUNTY**
(EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)

(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number)

Marc E. Weinstein WEINSTEIN LAW FIRM, LLC 500
Office Center Dr., Ste. 400, Ft. Washington, PA 19034

DEFENDANTS

LEHIGH VALLEY HEALTH NETWORK, INC.

County of Residence of First Listed Defendant
(IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)

NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF
THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.

Attorneys (If Known)

II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

- ☐ 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff ☒ 3 Federal Question
(U.S. Government Not a Party)
- ☐ 2 U.S. Government Defendant ☐ 4 Diversity
(Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)

III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES (Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff and One Box for Defendant)

- | | PTF | DEF | | PTF | DEF |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Citizen of This State | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | Incorporated or Principal Place of Business In This State | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Citizen of Another State | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | Incorporated and Principal Place of Business In Another State | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | Foreign Nation | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |

IV. NATURE OF SUIT (Place an "X" in One Box Only)Click here for: [Nature of Suit Code Descriptions.](#)

CONTRACT	TORTS	FORFEITURE/PENALTY	BANKRUPTCY	OTHER STATUTES
<input type="checkbox"/> 110 Insurance <input type="checkbox"/> 120 Marine <input type="checkbox"/> 130 Miller Act <input type="checkbox"/> 140 Negotiable Instrument <input type="checkbox"/> 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment <input type="checkbox"/> 151 Medicare Act <input type="checkbox"/> 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excludes Veterans) <input type="checkbox"/> 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits <input type="checkbox"/> 160 Stockholders' Suits <input type="checkbox"/> 190 Other Contract <input type="checkbox"/> 195 Contract Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 196 Franchise	PERSONAL INJURY <input type="checkbox"/> 310 Airplane <input type="checkbox"/> 315 Airplane Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 320 Assault, Libel & Slander <input type="checkbox"/> 330 Federal Employers' Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 340 Marine <input type="checkbox"/> 345 Marine Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 350 Motor Vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> 355 Motor Vehicle Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 360 Other Personal Injury <input type="checkbox"/> 362 Personal Injury - Medical Malpractice PERSONAL INJURY <input type="checkbox"/> 365 Personal Injury - Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 367 Health Care/Pharmaceutical Personal Injury Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability PERSONAL PROPERTY <input type="checkbox"/> 370 Other Fraud <input type="checkbox"/> 371 Truth in Lending <input type="checkbox"/> 380 Other Personal Property Damage <input type="checkbox"/> 385 Property Damage Product Liability	<input type="checkbox"/> 625 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881 <input type="checkbox"/> 690 Other LABOR <input type="checkbox"/> 710 Fair Labor Standards Act <input type="checkbox"/> 720 Labor/Management Relations <input type="checkbox"/> 740 Railway Labor Act <input type="checkbox"/> 751 Family and Medical Leave Act <input type="checkbox"/> 790 Other Labor Litigation <input type="checkbox"/> 791 Employee Retirement Income Security Act IMMIGRATION <input type="checkbox"/> 462 Naturalization Application <input type="checkbox"/> 465 Other Immigration Actions	<input type="checkbox"/> 422 Appeal 28 USC 158 <input type="checkbox"/> 423 Withdrawal 28 USC 157 PROPERTY RIGHTS <input type="checkbox"/> 820 Copyrights <input type="checkbox"/> 830 Patent <input type="checkbox"/> 835 Patent - Abbreviated New Drug Application <input type="checkbox"/> 840 Trademark <input type="checkbox"/> 880 Defend Trade Secrets Act of 2016 SOCIAL SECURITY <input type="checkbox"/> 861 HIA (1395ff) <input type="checkbox"/> 862 Black Lung (923) <input type="checkbox"/> 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g)) <input type="checkbox"/> 864 SSID Title XVI <input type="checkbox"/> 865 RSI (405(g)) FEDERAL TAX SUITS <input type="checkbox"/> 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant) <input type="checkbox"/> 871 IRS—Third Party 26 USC 7609	<input type="checkbox"/> 375 False Claims Act <input type="checkbox"/> 376 Qui Tam (31 USC 3729(a)) <input type="checkbox"/> 400 State Reapportionment <input type="checkbox"/> 410 Antitrust <input type="checkbox"/> 430 Banks and Banking <input type="checkbox"/> 450 Commerce <input type="checkbox"/> 460 Deportation <input type="checkbox"/> 470 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations <input type="checkbox"/> 480 Consumer Credit (15 USC 1681 or 1692) <input type="checkbox"/> 485 Telephone Consumer Protection Act <input type="checkbox"/> 490 Cable/Sat TV <input type="checkbox"/> 850 Securities/Commodities/Exchange <input type="checkbox"/> 890 Other Statutory Actions <input type="checkbox"/> 891 Agricultural Acts <input type="checkbox"/> 893 Environmental Matters <input type="checkbox"/> 895 Freedom of Information Act <input type="checkbox"/> 896 Arbitration <input type="checkbox"/> 899 Administrative Procedure Act/Review or Appeal of Agency Decision <input type="checkbox"/> 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes
REAL PROPERTY <input type="checkbox"/> 210 Land Condemnation <input type="checkbox"/> 220 Foreclosure <input type="checkbox"/> 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment <input type="checkbox"/> 240 Torts to Land <input type="checkbox"/> 245 Tort Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 290 All Other Real Property	CIVIL RIGHTS <input type="checkbox"/> 440 Other Civil Rights <input type="checkbox"/> 441 Voting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 442 Employment <input type="checkbox"/> 443 Housing/Accommodations <input type="checkbox"/> 445 Amer. w/Disabilities - Employment <input type="checkbox"/> 446 Amer. w/Disabilities - Other <input type="checkbox"/> 448 Education PRISONER PETITIONS Habeas Corpus: <input type="checkbox"/> 463 Alien Detainee <input type="checkbox"/> 510 Motions to Vacate Sentence <input type="checkbox"/> 530 General <input type="checkbox"/> 535 Death Penalty Other: <input type="checkbox"/> 540 Mandamus & Other <input type="checkbox"/> 550 Civil Rights <input type="checkbox"/> 555 Prison Condition <input type="checkbox"/> 560 Civil Detainee - Conditions of Confinement			

V. ORIGIN (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

- ☒ 1 Original Proceeding ☐ 2 Removed from State Court ☐ 3 Remanded from Appellate Court ☐ 4 Reinstated or Reopened ☐ 5 Transferred from Another District (specify) ☐ 6 Multidistrict Litigation - Transfer ☐ 8 Multidistrict Litigation - Direct File

VI. CAUSE OF ACTION

Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filing (Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity):
42 U.S.C. § 2000e(k)

Brief description of cause:
PREGNANCY DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT

VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:

☒ CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cv.P. **DEMAND \$**

CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint:

JURY DEMAND: ☒ Yes ☐ No

VIII. RELATED CASE(S) IF ANY

(See instructions):

JUDGE _____ DOCKET NUMBER _____

DATE

Aug 29, 2022

SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD

/s/ Marc E. Weinstein

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

RECEIPT # _____ AMOUNT _____ APPLYING IFP _____ JUDGE _____ MAG. JUDGE _____

DESIGNATION FORM

(to be used by counsel or pro se plaintiff to indicate the category of the case for the purpose of assignment to the appropriate calendar)

Address of Plaintiff: _____

Address of Defendant: _____

Place of Accident, Incident or Transaction: _____

RELATED CASE, IF ANY:

Case Number: _____ Judge: _____ Date Terminated: _____

Civil cases are deemed related when **Yes** is answered to any of the following questions:

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Is this case related to property included in an earlier numbered suit pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Does this case involve the same issue of fact or grow out of the same transaction as a prior suit pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Does this case involve the validity or infringement of a patent already in suit or any earlier numbered case pending or within one year previously terminated action of this court? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Is this case a second or successive habeas corpus, social security appeal, or pro se civil rights case filed by the same individual? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

I certify that, to my knowledge, the within case ☐ is / ☐ is not related to any case now pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court except as noted above.


Must sign here

DATE: _____

Attorney-at-Law / Pro Se Plaintiff

Attorney I.D. # (if applicable)

CIVIL: (Place a ✓ in one category only)

A. Federal Question Cases:

- ☐ 1. Indemnity Contract, Marine Contract, and All Other Contracts
 - ☐ 2. FELA
 - ☐ 3. Jones Act-Personal Injury
 - ☐ 4. Antitrust
 - ☐ 5. Patent
 - ☐ 6. Labor-Management Relations
 - ☐ 7. Civil Rights
 - ☐ 8. Habeas Corpus
 - ☐ 9. Securities Act(s) Cases
 - ☐ 10. Social Security Review Cases
 - ☐ 11. All other Federal Question Cases
- (Please specify): _____

B. Diversity Jurisdiction Cases:

- ☐ 1. Insurance Contract and Other Contracts
 - ☐ 2. Airplane Personal Injury
 - ☐ 3. Assault, Defamation
 - ☐ 4. Marine Personal Injury
 - ☐ 5. Motor Vehicle Personal Injury
 - ☐ 6. Other Personal Injury (Please specify): _____
 - ☐ 7. Products Liability
 - ☐ 8. Products Liability – Asbestos
 - ☐ 9. All other Diversity Cases
- (Please specify): _____

ARBITRATION CERTIFICATION

(The effect of this certification is to remove the case from eligibility for arbitration.)

I, _____, counsel of record or pro se plaintiff, do hereby certify:

- ☐ Pursuant to Local Civil Rule 53.2, § 3(c) (2), that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the damages recoverable in this civil action case exceed the sum of \$150,000.00 exclusive of interest and costs:
- ☐ Relief other than monetary damages is sought.


Sign here if applicable

DATE: _____

Attorney-at-Law / Pro Se Plaintiff

Attorney I.D. # (if applicable)

NOTE: A trial de novo will be a trial by jury only if there has been compliance with F.R.C.P. 38.